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REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed on December 1, 2005, Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration. Claims 1-9, 11-23 and 25-28 are now pending in this Application. Claims 1 and 14 are independent claims and the remaining claims are dependent claims. In this Amendment, claims 10 and 24 have been cancelled and claims 27 and 28 have been added. A version of the claims containing markings to show the changes made is included hereinabove. Applicants believe that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance. A notice to this affect is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0193097 to Guthrie et al. (hereinafter Guthrie). Guthrie has a priority date of June 6, 2001. The present application has been amended to include a claim of priority to U.S. provisional patent application number 60/277,072 filed March 19, 2001, the claim to priority having been unintentionally omitted when the present application was filed. Applicants have included herewith a petition for an unintentionally delayed claim to priority, a statement that the entire delay between when the claim was due and the date the claim was filed was unintentional and without deceitful intent, and a check for the surcharge.

In view of the above, the priority date of the present application (March 19, 2001) is prior to the priority date of Guthrie (June 6, 2001), therefore Guthrie must be removed as a prior art reference. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Guthrie is believed to have been overcome.

Claim 2 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Claims 10 and 24 have been canceled, and claims 27 and 28 have been added. Support for claims 27 and 28 can be found in the specification as filed at page 4, lines 15-25. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added.

In view of the above, the Examiner's rejections have been overcome placing claims 1-9, 11-23 and 25-28 in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

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Applicants hereby petitions for any extension of time which is required to maintain the pendency of this case. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-3735.

If the enclosed papers or fees are considered incomplete, the Patent Office is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned collect at (508) 616-9660, in Westborough, Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,



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